

Benj^m Fowler 101

Z I O N'S

O R N A M E N T S

R. L. S.
AND

O F F E R I N G S.

THE AUTHOR UNKNOWN, AND YET
WELL KNOWN.

WITH A RECOMMENDATORY PREFACE, &c.
By W^m HUNTINGTON, S.S.

L O N D O N :

Printed for the AUTHOR;

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Broad Mead, Bristol; and by Mr. CHALMERS, Camden Alley,
Portsmouth Common.

MDCCLXXXVII.



P R E F A C E.

To the pious MOTHERS IN ISRAEL (a), *and to the*
virtuous DAUGHTERS OF ZION (b).

HONOURABLE WOMEN (c),

THE following sheets of *poetry* and *prose* were written by a daughter of mine in the faith, whom our Sovereign LORD was pleased to bring to the knowledge of the truth under my ministry about eight years ago. When I first knew her she was a person of considerable property, and carried her head very loftily; but the chastening rod of GOD has humbled her pride, and the frowns of Providence have scattered every farthing of her independency, and brought her to depend wholly on that promise that contains the blessings of this life, and of that which is to come.

The manuscripts were sent some time ago to me for my private perusal, with a charge that

(a) 2 Sam. xx. 19. (b) Song iii. 11. (c) Acts xvii. 12.

they should not be seen by any other ; but as God approves of the use of honest means, as well as a dependence on his bounty, I thought the publication of them might contribute to her present relief, as her husband is out of employ, and she is at this time *pregnant and pennyless*.

As it is a female performance I thought it most proper to dedicate it to godly women ; and as the Authoress is a *daughter of Israel*, who so proper to patronise it as the gracious fraternity of her own sex ? knowing that if it meets with your approbation and patronage, none of the stronger gender will ever presume to interfere. To your protection, reverend matrons, and pious daughters, I commit both the *prose* and *verse* of this—what shall I call her ? why a PROPHETESS, and MISTRESS OF ARTS. You are to sit in judgment upon it as critical reviewers ; and to your various, fluctuating, and fallible judgments, it must submit. The first piece is written in verse ; the second is a comment on some obscure passages in the ceremonial law, which is in prose.

If I might be allowed to give my judgment of the matter, I think it is a composition of the following ingredients : There is some choice *divinity* in it—some *sweet experience*—some very *warm raptures*

raptures—a pure *love to Christ*—and a determination to make him *all in all*; there is some *gospel simplicity*—some *evangelical sentiments*, and a desire to bring the scriptures down to an heart-felt experience, to which she is no stranger; there is a little *zeal*, a little *humour*, a little *female wit*, and enough of *female weakness* to inform every reader that it is the production of a woman.

If any should desire to see the person, her present place of residence may be known by her own letter which follows mine. That you may peruse it to your edification, satisfaction, and comfort, is the desire and prayer of,

VENERABLE MATRONS,

Your dutiful son,

and,

VIRTUOUS DAUGHTERS OF ZION,

Your affectionate brother,

WILLIAM HUNTINGTON.

Winchester Row,
May 17, 1787.

LETTER to the AUTHORESS.

DEAR MADAM,

I RECEIVED yours, which I suppose was written from the country of Moab, as the pleasing name of *Naomi* is laid aside, and that of *Mara* adapted. It appears to me that God intends to make thee and me experimentally acquainted with his sovereignty. He has taken away all thy independency, and brought thee into this extreme poverty, that he may display the mysteries of his providence, and likewise give thee an opportunity of trying thy interest with him, and the strength of thy faith. Thou hast read of my trials, and of the LORD's kind dealings with me; and it appears as if thou must tread in the footsteps of thy poor father. I know it is hard to flesh and blood, and thy present situation is singularly deplorable;—no money—husband no employ—pregnant—and destitute of every necessary; all these things, faith unbelief, are against thee. But thou art not in a worse case than the Virgin Mary was;—for if thou hast a place and every necessary yet to seek, so had she; *there was no room for her in the inn*—she was obliged to put up with a *stable*; the *manger* was the *cradle*, and *swaddling clothes* must serve instead of a *complete set of childbed linen*; there were no *fortune-tellers* to *stick the pincushion*, nor do we read of any Ladies of quality attending the groaning; *GOD had put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted one of low degree*; but

but if carnal reason had been judge in this matter, she would have said "Poor exaltation this!" But we know the dignity of the saints centers in their God; and their honour and comfort consists in a saving knowledge of him, and of the blessings that he has conferred on them.

But you see Providence interfered wonderfully in Mary's behalf; for though the Jews lodged the LORD *of life* in the manger, yet the wise men of the east *adored and worshipped him*; and no wonder, when he was to be *the light of the Gentiles, and the salvation of the ends of the earth*. I believe poor Mary was almost, if not altogether, as poor at that time as thou art now, but God sent her a supply by the wise men—they offered gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and that served to defray the expences of Joseph and Mary into Egypt, and to keep them there until Herod had filled up his measure of iniquity by the destruction of Rachel's infant progeny, for which cruel slaughter she is represented as *weeping, and refusing to be comforted*; and no wonder, when she, who had her anxiety for children so long crossed with barrenness, should have such a destruction come on the very fruit that she had begged of God; just as if the blessings that God gives to faith are to be nothing but sport for the children of the devil. But God tells her *to refrain her voice from weeping, and her eyes from tears, for her work [of bringing forth, nursing, and swaddling] should be rewarded; that her children should come again from the land of the enemy; for there was hope in her end that her children should come again to their own border*. If Rachel is represented as

A 4

weeping

weeping at the slaughter of her little ones, surely she must rejoice much more to see two thousand grandchildren (from the *son of her sorrow*) arrive in heaven at once.

Give not way to unbelief; I tell thee, in the name of the LORD, that he will provide for thee. He has promised to *bring to the birth*, and to *give strength to bring forth*; he has done this for thee already in a spiritual birth, and, as the God of providence, he will do the same in a natural one, for *no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly*.

I have had a thought of printing those little manuscripts that you sent me, as I think they might contribute a little to your present relief. But the poetry wants a little mending; I have therefore inclosed the Poem on the *precious stones of Aaron's breast-plate*, and desire you to correct it. I see no cause why it should be ashamed to shew its head before any female performeress or performance that I have seen in my days. The experience and judgment that God has given you, and the sweet communion and fellowship that he has indulged you with, has brought your soul nearer the *equinoctial* of the *Sun of Righteousness* by many *degrees* than any that I have read of, except those in the Bible. Some indeed of our female writers have given us a few more human flourishes and empty expressions than you have done, which serve to obscure the soul-barrenness of the author from the eye of the reader. Sound divinity, flowing from the experience and enjoyment of it, though it runs in rugged verse, is
better

better than all the human flourishes and tinkling sounds that are sent into the world by moon-blind souls, who never got *one degree* from the *frigid zone*.

I expect that you will signify your pleasure in your next; and let it not be dated from the country of Moab; *for the LORD shall recompense thy work, and a full reward shall be given thee of the LORD GOD of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.* Thou hast got CHRIST in hand, and Heaven in hope, and both secured by an inviolable oath, and an immutable promise; and depend upon it that heaven and earth shall end in a shadow before one jot or tittle of truth shall move from the eternal mind, or fail an heir of promise. The LORD forbid that I should sin against God in ceasing to pray for you; you have an interest in my poor petition, and in my best wishes. And in the bonds of the gospel I remain,

DEAR MADAM,

Your affectionate father in CHRIST,

And willing servant for his sake,

W. HUNTINGTON.

Winchester Row,
May 10, 1787.

To

To Mr. HUNTINGTON.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE not a poetic line at my command; which plainly proves that the ALMIGHTY does not intend me for a writer, but to keep me at the old feminine employment—namely, that of making little coats, bringing forth children in my old age, and managing the house well; and my wicked *heart* doth often exclaim, Oh, why hath he done so? though my tongue dare not utter it; well knowing that he gives no account of his matters till we are able to bear it. My soul's desire is to live in the visions of GOD;—to be freed from so many maternal cares;—to give the children to nurses, as some of our godly mothers have done before me, and to *write* about loving-kindness and tender mercy all the day long. But submission becomes me better; and like my poor sister Hannah, I must quit the pen, and keep to my needle.

You must excuse me, my dear Sir, if I differ with you in opinion; as I think all that I have hitherto written is too trifling to be exposed to public view; for I have gospel modesty enough to confess that I see nothing excellent in it, except *the spirit* in which it was written; nor did I ever intend the perusal of it should be given to any eye but yours—which has often seen my weakness, and (through grace) been blind to it. This partiality I can excuse, and have no objection to a little more of it; as 'tis this gentle
dealing

dealing which my soul is so fond of, and by which the LORD has led us to our present greatness; to whose everlasting honour be it spoken, we have never found any so blind, nor any so perfect as the Holy One of Israel. There is a saying of Solomon's that suits my feelings and the present subject exactly, and therefore I shall quote it.—After he had taken an humble survey of that wisdom with which he was so peculiarly blessed, he gives the honour to the LORD that gave it (no doubt), but says, *What can the man do that cometh after the King?* My meaning for quoting the passage is,—grace has made you a king, and God has crowned you with knowledge in divine things in a wonderful manner; therefore my opinion is, that the man or woman who shall write divinity in our days will never be made half so useful; and my desire is, that you would wrap my feeble talent (for writing) up in a napkin, and let it lay still in obscurity. The LORD bless thee! and still embrace with loving-kindness thy soul that has so often been a blessing to mine.

You seem to be pleased with the effusions of my heart, poor as they are, and therefore I have lent you a little book in which is a bit of my *prose*; and if you like the production, let me have the book when you have read it; but if you like it not, you may keep it, and serve it as you have served all the rest of the silly authors and authoresses—that is, burn it.

How glad should I be of a line now and then from my dear Mr. H. to strengthen my hands in God;
and

and I have a right to expect it, seeing there is a command to strengthen the feeble minded. You may send them to No. 24, *Union-street, Middlesex Hospital*, for a little while; but where I shall be tossed to next the LORD only knoweth, for my heart can devise no way at present, nor can I direct my steps; but daily pine, in thought, for that holy region where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest.

S—— L——.

A
P O E M
ON THE
Benefits of Durable Clothing;

OR,

The Spiritual Signification of the TWELVE JEWELS that
bear the Names of Israel's Sons, in the Breast-plate
of Aaron the High Priest.

I have used Similitudes. *Hosea* xii. 10.

P. O. Box 100

NEW YORK

Received of the Treasurer of the City of New York

the sum of \$100.00

for the purchase of the City of New York

for the year 1864

A
P O E M.

*Can a maid forget her ornaments? or a bride her
attire?*

I.

GOD has chosen a few, for the sake of his fame,
And to these has unfolded the thoughts of his heart;
Then refers to their choice his most excellent name,
But swears by himself they shall never depart.

II.

Their choice is ordained to wait on him still,
For with gentle compulsion they cannot but love;
His almighty spirit has bowed their will,
And the titles bestowed are "Fairest," and "Dove."

III.

Such are willingly forced his presence to seek,
And they emulate Mary, that sweet penitent;
They chuse the *good part*, even Jesus the meek,
And *lay up* the treasures that heaven has sent.

IV.

IV.

The person of Aaron prefigures our Priest,
 The sanctified robes his immaculate walk;
 The *fair-colour'd stones* what is hid in his breast,
 And the tinkling bells his more innocent talk.

*Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the
 Holy City.—Put ye on the LORD JESUS.*

SARDIUS.

V.

THE SARDIUS in colour is sanguine (or blood) (a),
 And shews us that Jesus himself is the *life* (b);
 Without fire or mother, by few understood,
 But an oath to the truth puts an end to all strife.

VI.

This Object desired is ruddy and fair,
 The red of the rose doth his saving-health shew;
 His paleness in death proves his love to be rare,
 And sweetly proclaims him no fairer than true.

VII.

When his name's fully known and the heart is his prize,
 The soul's former features he'll partly efface;
 Acknowledge the power of one of thine eyes,
 And from that blissful moment be health to thy face.

(a) Exod. xxviii. 17—20.

(b) Levit. xvii. 11.

VIII.

VIII.

The first-born of Jacob, and first of his might,
Was grav'd on this stone by the order of God;
Unstable was Reuben—unworthy birthright,
But all the unstable shall smart by the rod.

IX.

Was Reuben a stumbling-block to the rest
That stood in the warfare? so Deborah saith;
With abundance of grace sure he never was bless'd,
But if faith be diminutive, still it is faith.

X.

Let Reuben, faith Moses, be blessed indeed!
Let him live, and not die, for the promise is sure (a);
Let his men be abundant, and see who's decreed
In futurity every curse to endure.

Many waters cannot quench love.—Put on Charity.

T O P A Z.

XI.

WE see in the TOPAZ, that's bright as the flame,
The unquenchable love that was stronger than death;
Irresistible fire—the Father's new name,
The Spirit of CHRIST—the refiner's own breath.

(a) Deut. xxxiii. 6.

B

XII.

XII.

In the womb it had pow'r—in the manger it warm'd;
 It charm'd in the child, and the wise men it drew;
 In his youth it upheld—in the temple alarm'd—
 Purified where it bosom'd, but center'd in few.

XIII.

It endur'd in the desert, and suffer'd extreme,
 Unimpair'd by reproach, and indignant of loss;
 Astonish'd his saints, they appear'd like a dream,
 When it shone in the garden, and blaz'd on the cross.

XIV.

The second from Jacob, and Simeon by name,
 Exists on this stone in the breast of the priest;
 He was cruel in anger, and mute shall be fame;
 When the Sire has curst, and faith can't release.

XV.

In Moses's blessing this tribe is unblest'd,
 And expung'd in the record—he mentions it not.
 Was the sentence of Jacob in anger express'd (a),
 That silence must cover his name with a blot?

XVI.

Love follows the offspring, and sanctifies some;
 For John has declar'd his twelve thousands are seal'd;
 The soul of the fire is often unknown,
 While the son in the covenant's sweetly conceal'd.

(a) Genesis xlix. 7.

*And burning coals went forth at his feet.—Be ye
angry and sin not.*

CARBUNCLE.

XVII.

THE fiery CARBUNCLE shews GOD is severe,
And his fatherly rods claim the honour that's due;
His all-righteous anger the saint must revere,
When it falls on the head of th' incredulous crew.

XVIII.

In the soul he converts how restricted it burns!
Or the spirit would fail which his power has made;
How dreadful its strength when his back he once turns,
And the sentence "Depart," makes the sinner afraid.

XIX.

Should a *saint* ever bosom this terrible stone (a)?
How can meekness comport with invincible hate?
If the *friends of the world* shall to GOD be unknown,
They can't walk together—the path is too freight.

XX.

Shall the portion of Levi be nothing but wrath?
Shall he never feel GOD but inflexibly just?
Must his secret iniquities all be brought forth?
And his soul find no object in which it may trust?

(a) Exodus xxxii. 26, 27. 29.

XXI.

No, far be't from him, give him blessings in store;
LORD, favour the work of his love and his faith;
Accept of the Thummim and Urim he wore,
Give him light, and perfection, and life from thy
breath.

XXII.

And what now has anger to do with this child,
For he's bless'd and renewed for ever by grace;
Let him smite through the foe who his spirit beguil'd (a),
And eternally flash in that enemy's face.

Buy the truth.——Walk in truth.

EMERALD.

XXIII.

IN the verdurous tint of the EMERALD stone,
The *truth* of the LORD is conspicuously seen;
And this was reveal'd to the high priest alone,
When the dry stick of Aaron appeared so green.

XXIV.

God's free gift to Adam was ev'ry green thing,
For food; or for med'cine, the life to sustain;
And the state of that soul is perpetual spring,
Who *lives* on the *word*, and yet hungers again.

(a) Deut. xxxiii. 8—11.

XXV.

XXV.

Incorruptible gifts, from the fair Tree of Life,
 Are truths in the heart, and kept moist with his
 dew ;
 Fulfilment to mortals alone ends the strife,
 They must see them mature, ere they say God is true.

XXVI.

'Twas this precious jewel that bare the fourth son,
 And this colt to the Vine by election was bound (a);
 But when loos'd from infirmity he has begun
 To relish true pleasure—*green* pastures are found (b).

XXVII.

LORD hearken to Judah, says Moses, he's thine,
 Let his voice be regarded, and hands be made strong;
 Let him hold fast the truth, at the cross ne'er repine,
 Let life and salvation be always his song.

XXVIII.

His teeth are made white; his affections are pure;
 For his food is not folly—but truth often try'd;
 His glistening eye does not shine to allure,
 But is cheerful with pleasure, for Jesus has dy'd.

(a) Gen. xlix. 8—12.

(b) Job xxxix. 5. 8. Psalm xxiii. 2.

Put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue (a).

SAPPHIRE.

XXIX.

IN the blue-colour'd SAPPHIRE how sweetly are seen
The shoes of a saint (*b*), and the pavement of GOD (*c*);
For if stormy winds should blow ever so keen,
He may walk in tranquillity under the rod.

XXX.

If the heavens terrestrial are vexed with storms,
Then the firmament's hid till the tempest doth cease;
If CHRIST's lovely brow his resentment performs,
Pray what has a soul then to do with his peace?

XXXI.

The intrinsecal worth of this glittering gem
Shall never be scann'd by the faithfulest soul;
For possession below is no more than the *hem*
Of his garment, whose delicate self is the *whole*.

XXXII.

Let Zebulon preach, for his spirit is bless'd,
He has heaven abridg'd, or an earnest bestow'd;
The ORDER of saintship is worn on his breast,
And he's bid to rejoice when he leaves his abode (*d*).

(*a*) Numb. xv. 38. Psalm cxlvii. 14. (*b*) Eph. vi. 15.

(*c*) Exod. xxiv. 10.

(*d*) Deut. xxxiii. 18.

XXXIII.

XXXIII.

You may safely enquire the law at his *mouth*,
 For peace is his property, Jesus his theme;
 And when he's refreshed by gales from the south,
 The vessels of honour may profit by him.

XXXIV.

He's an haven (a) for ships in a *haven* secure,
 The haven desired, where thousands would rest,
 Who possess much in hope, but have much to endure,
 Before true felicity can be possess'd.

*Upon his fore-front did he put the golden plate, the
 holy crown (b).*

DIAMOND.

XXXV.

THE whiteness, the clearness, and trembling rays,
 That glance from the DIAMOND, plainly doth shew
 That 'tis Beauty of Holiness Seraphims praise,
 And the object we worship is Holiness too.

XXXVI.

Let the beauty of God (c) be thy terrible dress (d),
 I have chose it, saith David, my soul to adorn (e);
 And tho' it shines faint, and will scarcely express
 My character here—I'm the foolish man's scorn.

(a) Genesis xlix. 13.

(b) Levit. viii. 9. 1 Pet. ii. 5.

(c) Psalm xcvi. 9.

(d) Psalm xc. 17.

(e) Psalm xciii. 5.

XXXVII.

It has scar'd mine acquaintance, my lovers are gone,
 My tears were their sport, and my sorrow their food;
 If merry they hate me—despise if I mourn,
 Because I still follow the thing that is good.

XXXVIII.

How dreadful to sinners this radiant gem!
 No rest can be found till a pardon appears;
 Its rays will strike dead, and yet Issachar's name (a)
 Has rested upon it for many long years.

XXXIX.

My son, said the Patriarch, 's a very strong ass,
 And yet he must couch between this and his guilt;
 LORD, give him but rest, and thy land shall surpass
 All the treasures of Egypt! (and faith says, thou wilt.)

XL.

My stiff-necked son shall at length be subdu'd,
 And his shoulder be humbled to carry the cross;
 He'll gladly submit when his heart is renew'd,
 And he's sensible all beside Jesus is dross.

(a) Genesis xlix. 14, 15.

*I have been very jealous for the LORD GOD of
Hosts (a).*

L I G U R E.

XLII.

THE LIGURE's of *mingled colours* we're told,
And is dropp'd from the Lynx—a most quick-sighted
beast;

A more piercing ray we shall never behold,
Than the light of the LORD—'tis his sov'reign inquest.

XLII.

By his sovereign rays are our follies discern'd,
Then his *jealousy* burns for his glory anew (b);
He must be aveng'd (for his honour's concern'd)
In anger on many—in mercy on few.

XLIII.

This infinite mixture of light, love, and grief,
And anger restrain'd (towards men of his choice);
Is he jealous of us? oh the balmy relief!
Then he loves to excess, and my soul shall rejoice.

XLIV.

My son shall be judge, said the Prophet in faith (c),
But an upright Inquisitor must be possess'd
Of anger, of mercy, and grief (the word faith),
For judgment perverted on souls should not rest.

(a) 1 Kings, xix. 10.

(b) Deut. xxxii. 21.

(c) Genesis xlix. 16, 17.

XLV.

He sins may remit, and he sins may retain,
 For the spirit of Jesus is found in his heart;
 And if his instructions the sinner can't tame,
 He's a serpent to bite with incurable smart.

XLVI.

Dan's heroes must fall by the fury of God,
 Tho' they ride upon horses, swift spirits can't save;
 For a bite in the heel will soon turn to a rod,
 And when falling (like Balaam), how great the amaze!

*The world was made by him, and the world knew
 him not. To one is given the word of wisdom.*

A G A T E.

XLVII.

THE AGATE's a stone that is partly opaque,
 And of *flesh-colour'd* tint, but lustre hath none;
 If applied to the light it an object may take,
 But otherwise sheweth no more than its own.

XLVIII.

In its curious veins human forms do appear,
 Trees, rivers, and flowers, you'll plainly descry;
 And if this precious gem any meaning doth bear,
 The wisdom of GOD in CREATION doth lie.

XLIX.

XLIX.

The body's construction proclaims it aloud,
 How the soul doth exist is above human sense;
 But the infinite wisdom that humbles the proud,
 More brilliant appear'd at the Saviour's expence.

L.

Poor Gad's overcome! and his father must grieve (a),
 A troop of corruptions had wasted his son;
 And his own ragged righteousness could not relieve,
 For WISDOM ne'er planned the web he had spun.

LI.

This child ne'er consider'd the end of these things,
 That he must be uncover'd and clothed anew;
 That folly can't stand in the presence of Kings,
 That his name must be *Prudence*, and follies be few.

LII.

How Gad was enlarg'd is a pleasure to hear,
 But no thanks to him that he better things found;
 'Twas the wisdom of JESUS transplanted them there,
 And saved his soul, though his sins gave a wound.

Be clothed with humility.

AMETHYST.

LIII.

THE AMETHYST glows with the purplest dye,
 Which chiefly is seen on the persons of Kings;
 But there's *royalty* shining in Jesus's eye,
 Which scatt'reth all evil wherever it springs.

(a) Genesis xlix. 19.

LIV.

LIV.

A ray from this orb will confound and amaze,
 A look from the LORD makes the feeblest strong;
 It sinks into sorrow, or gladdens with praise,
 The vessels of honour that to him belong.

LV.

His tunable *voice* is with majesty fill'd,
 With majesty also his *person's* enshrin'd;
 In majesty too is his *kingdom* beheld,
 And a *few* with his majesty must be entwin'd.

LVI.

Highly favour'd was Asher;—with royalty blest (a) !
 And a numerous offspring he's bounden to feed;
 For the LAMB is so big that his spirit's oppress'd,
 Till he shareth the spoils among others that need.

LVII.

What a cluster of blessings there hangs upon him!
 An *acceptable spirit* his name doth endear;
 His *shoes* *brass* and *iron*, tho' not very trim (b)
 Till dipped in oil, then adieu to all fear.

LVIII.

So lavish is Moses in praising this tribe,
 That he talks like a man who is fill'd with new wine;
 The Redeemer, saith he, does in *Asher's* *help* ride,
 And the arms everlasting his soul shall entwine!

(a) Genesis xlix. 20.

(b) Deut. xxxiii. 25.

Let thy tender mercy be for my comfort.

B E R Y L.

LIX.

THE green of the BERYL may teach us the worth
Of that gentle Spirit we often have griev'd;
But mercy delights him, and still goeth forth,
To pardon transgression (tho' scarcely believ'd).

LX.

'Tis the natural hue of the young growing plants,
That have sprung from the ground and imbibed the dew;
The taller-grown saint other nourishment wants,
He is stronger in faith, and hath *pleasure* in view.

LXI.

To allure broken hearts, and the fainting to cheer,
Our dearest Redeemer's compar'd to a branch;
So *tender* in spirit, that none need to fear
On his boundless compassion with courage to launch.

LXII.

Naphtali from bondage appears to be free (a),
And he skips as if first in the heavenly race;
Perhaps he'll be hunted—but happy is he!
His words are all goodly, and so is his face.

(a) Genesis xlix. 21.

LXIII.

LXIII.

That soul now, said Moses, is blessed indeed!
The skies have pour'd MERCY, and what could it more?
It is rare to be full (but so God has decreed),
He is *satisfied* now, (tho' *his cup shall run o'er* (a)).

LXIV.

It's no wonder he mounts, for he goes with the wind,
And a *southerly gale* every fruit has brought forth;
The *west* may afford him a passage less kind,
And when he's becalm'd he'll cry out for the *north* (b).

Put on thy strength, O Zion.

ONYX*.

LXV.

THE ONYX is costly, but gloomy it's hue,
No dazzling lustre the curious to please;
And the thought of God's strength (till created anew)
Is so dreadful to sin it admits of no ease.

LXVI.

But of all his perfections 'tis one of the first;
'Tis the bulwark he sets round the favourite soul;
If Job had been humbled, that Devil accurs'd
Had ne'er been permitted such mischiefs to roll.

(a) Deut. xxxiii. 23.

(b) Songs iv. 16.

* Horny colour.

LXVII.

God moveth the hedge and the wild boar doth waste,
 His substance is marred, his children are slain;
 His body is pester'd, his comforts are chas'd,
 His wife reprobates, and his soul doth complain.

LXVIII.

But Joseph was fruitful, he grew by the well (a),
 And boasted of nothing but mercy conferr'd;
 So improv'ish'd in spirit you'll easily tell,
 That the object he worshipp'd was none but the LORD.

LXIX.

The archers may shoot, they may grieve, and may
 wound;
 They may hate and condemn him, and what doth he
 lose?
 Nought but dross and his tin, and for ought I have found
 He gather'd more strength (b) by the horn that he
 us'd (c).

LXX.

He had blessings from heaven, and blessings from earth;
 He had blessings of breasts, and some from the
 womb;
 Everlasting preferments his God brought him forth,
 Before his chaste body was laid in the tomb.

(a) Genesis xlix. 24.

(b) *Ibid.*

(c) Deut. xxxiii. 17.

This mortal shall put on immortality.

Our bed is green (a).

J A S P E R.

LXXI.

THE beautiful JASPER's the last *ever-green*,
That was set in the plate, means the glory of God;
Poor David pin'd more for this ravishing scene,
Than the poor thirsty hart for the clear-running flood.

LXXII.

The Apostles groan'd for it a number of years,
And thought dissolution the friendliest gate;
(For admission it granted in spite of their fears),
And, tho' gloomy's the portal, they enter'd in *state!*

LXXIII.

We have often conjectur'd what GLORY could mean,
But the Prophet declares we are foiled in this;
It's past all conception—the things were ne'er seen,
That God has laid up for his children in bliss.

LXXIV.

The kingdom's a blessing, and so is the crown;
Could a wise man think light of such honours—such
grace?

These children we're told cast the diadem down,
As if 'twere too little—and look in his *face.*

(a) Songs i. 16.

LXXV.

LXXV.

The title of Benjamin's "Lov'd of the LORD;"
 But why call'd a Wolf, that shall *ravin* all day?
 I suppose the poor soul had imbibed the word,
 And made very free—'cause there's nothing to *pay*.

LXXVI.

But the man is insatiable! when will he cease?
 Why not till the morning, if Jacob says true;
 He's to rise from the grave in the image of peace,
 As hungry as ever, to feast on a *crew* (a).

LXXVII.

Will he nothing remit? shall he nothing restore?
 Who'll be better for him? he's a character quaint!
 Loves he none but *himself*? O yes, he loves more!
 And at night he'll divide it 'tween God and the saint (b).

LXXVIII.

JEHOVAH shall cover him *all the day long* (c),
 He has found *immortality*—blest is he!
 And shall sing like an angel that rapturous song,
 "Life and love's EVERLASTING! it's come upon me!"

(a) Rev. ii. 26. and Rev. xix. 17, 18.

(b) Gen. xlix. 27.

(c) Deut. xxxiii. 12.

5 DE 54

AN
EXPLANATION
OF
SEVERAL OBSCURE PASSAGES
IN THE
CEREMONIAL LAW.

Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous
things out of thy law. PSALM cxix. 18.



AN
EXPLANATION
OF
Several Obscure Passages, &c.

LEVITICUS.

CHAP. V. VERSE 7.

IF a believer have sinned against God, and he be not able to bring a lamb for his offering;—that is, the meekness and gentleness of CHRIST, the lamb who was sacrificed for us; but has lost sight of the dear Redeemer, and with him all his peace and happiness, he shall bring for his trespass-offering two Turtle Doves, or two young Pigeons. The one I believe is CHRIST, who in the Psalms is called a Dove; and the other is the believer, called a Dove likewise; and if his affections are now grown cold, and he ceases to walk in love, he may plead the constancy, the mournful spirit, and the faithfulness of CHRIST (a). The

(a) Psalm lxxiv. 19.

sinner's own spirit in this case I believe doth signify the *sin-offering*; or, to use the words of Micah, he bears the indignation of the LORD because he has sinned against him. The burnt-offering is CHRIST, whose days were said to be consumed like smoke, and his bones burned like an hearth (a).

VERSE 8.

These are to be brought to the Priest—CHRIST JESUS our LORD, to whom the sinner must pray; for if JESUS is covered in his devotion, he dishonours this ever blessed object of all holy worship (b). But the sinner must exercise patience here, while his head (or capital sin) is wrung off, which is *unbelief*; this cannot be done without some pain. Job declares God took him by the neck and shook him to pieces; and David calls God's severe discipline broken bones, both which are bad enough to feel. But though the head is to be thus wrung off, the bird is not to be divided; in other words, the LORD will not cut him asunder, nor appoint him his portion with hypocrites and unbelievers. No, he multiplieth pardons.

VERSE 9.

The Priest shall sprinkle of the blood. By the blood in one sense understand sin. When God denounces final destruction to any soul in his law, 'tis expressed in these words—*his blood shall be upon him*; that is, he

(a) Psalm cii. 3.

(b) 1 Cor. xi. 4.

shall sink under the burden of his own sin. By *the blood of the offering being sprinkled on the side of the altar*, here understand the wounded side of CHRIST, which by faith the sinner must view again, or find no peace in his conscience. As the altar signifies the divinity of CHRIST, so does the side thereof his humanity, to which the spiritual life (a) (or blood) of every believer will cleave; and he must believe that his sin was upon the LORD also, and by the shedding of his precious blood it was atoned for.

If such a soul be strong in faith, his eye will often be turned to the side of the altar, and see his sin made an end of there; and a crucified Saviour will be the sweetest object in heaven or earth to him; and he will also see, that *the rest of the blood is wrung out at the boom of the altar*. The boom of an harbour is a let or hindrance to prevent ships from going out; and CHRIST is called an harbour or haven, as well as an altar; by which I conclude the boom here means God's decree, which doth for ever prevent our poor souls from sinking in perdition; and that the sins of believers are cast into the depths of the sea:—that they were imputed unto CHRIST, and on his account they never more shall be found on them to everlasting condemnation. The humbling lesson that a soul learns by this experience is, that this dear brother, offended, is harder to be won than a strong city; and their contentions are like the bars of a castle. It will constrain him to walk in the fear of God many days.

(a) Levit. xvii. 4.

VERSE 10.

When the LORD has caused the true light to shine into his heart, and shewed him all these things, the blessed Spirit operates as the spirit of love. This *burnt offering* is so cordially received (for GOD accepts nothing but his own), that a pardon is instantly vouchsafed again, and there is no more controversy between GOD and his soul; he prays and praises now with the spirit, and with the understanding also. He sees how much he is indebted to the Priest, who has borne his sins, and carried his sorrows; and that it is the intercession of CHRIST which alone prevails before the Father. He stands astonished at the grace of GOD, and thinks if ever grace abounded it is to such an one as himself; and is as much amazed at his propensity to wander from a friend like JESUS, who loveth at all times, and was a brother born for adversity.

VERSE 11.

But if he be not able to bring two turtle doves;—that is, if he cannot bring a living (or acceptable) offering—if every grace seems withered, and he has only a name to live, but is at present as it were dead; and his spirit too insensible to confess his sin, and he cries with David, “Quicken thou me, O LORD, according to thy word,” let him still pray, or offer up, as Moses says, the perpetual burnt offering. If he is so impoverished that he hath no other oblation than a heartless prayer, still it must go up, and with it the
tenth

tenth part of an ephab of fine flour. The dear Redeemer is called by himself a corn of wheat—by David the finest of the wheat—and by Moses the kidneys of the wheat; all which, I take it, signifies no other than his divine obedience to the law, which is imputed to us by faith for eternal justification. A soul with the last gleam of hope will be sure to catch hold of this: “For I had fainted (saith David) unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.” If the sinner is brought thus low, he can offer no oil (that is, joy) with this offering, for he has ceased now for a time to make JESUS his all, and in all; he does not enjoy him as his peace, pleasure, and sovereign felicity; joy is withered away because the face of his LORD is hid. As he puts *no oil on this offering, so he is to put no frankincense thereon*; he is not to conceive that sin is any perfume in the nostrils of GOD; it is the only thing his righteous soul hateth.

VERSE 12.

He shall bring his offering to the priest.—He shall come with this complaint to the Saviour also, who *shall take his handful of it, even a memorial thereof*; that is, he shall feel the sinner's trouble, and sympathise with him, as an High Priest who is touched with a feeling of our infirmities; *and shall burn the flour on the altar*; this is to shew us, that the Father accepts of our faith in the dear Redeemer's righteousness; for 'tis well-pleasing to him that we hold this truth,

and never let it go. But he is better pleased when we also walk in peace, light, life, love, and liberty; as he is said to live in or inhabit the praises of Israel. The fine flour is ever acceptable unto God; and it is no small consolation to believe that a soul shall have it to offer, even in the worst of times; for God has declared, that we shall not only present it to him in the morning—that is, when the soul is lively, and the glory of God is fresh in us, but also at night (a), when we sit in the regions of darkness, and in the shadow of death. It is as if the LORD would say, I'll never leave thee without a plea, lest the spirit should fail before me, and the soul which I have made.

VERSE 13.

And the Priest shall make an atonement for him. This is to teach us, that from the beginning to the end of our faith, nothing can be done for us without the Priest. And so sweetly is the Law and the Gospel blended, that Jesus indeed appears the first and the last. If a sacrifice is to be slain and presented unto God, faith views him as the substance of that shadow. If an offering or prayer is to go up, He performs every ceremony relative to that, such as pouring out first upon the soul that offers it the spirit of grace and supplication; interceding for him, and applying the benefits he thinks fit; carrying the soul's complaints to the Godhead, and sending from thence by

(a) Leviticus, vi. 20.

the Holy Ghost (the blessed bird which tells our matters) all the comfort we desire, and much more than we deserve. O how great is the condescension of the dear Redeemer! we are never so happy as when we can see his thoughts busy about us all the day long, and his precious soul hovering over us for good; his hand stretched out to relieve, and his tender bowels moved to pity! In this happy state his language seems to be perpetually, "What is thy petition, and what is thy request? it shall be granted, even to the half of my kingdom." This is abiding under the shadow of the ALMIGHTY indeed! This is looking at him and being blessed all the day long, and *things are sure to go well in Judah* when this is the case.

By the Priest's making an atonement for the sinner in one of the offerings (as is expressed in this verse), though but one is mentioned, yet the other is the spirit of faith, through which we do apply the fine flour, or the righteousness of CHRIST, to our souls; for God never grants a pardon to any soul, till he has made it a partaker of that invaluable gift. It is the spirit of God that keeps us from spiritual putrefaction, let us sink as low as we may in distress; for the Comforter shall abide with us for ever, and bring us out of it all, sooner or later. And this is the mark peculiar to believers; for if any man have not the spirit of CHRIST he is none of his, nor ever shall be without it. And *the remnant of the offering shall be the Priests, as a meat offering.* By this remnant understand

stand the sin that defiles our most holy service; and this the Redeemer was made to serve with: Thou hast made me, saith he, to serve with thy sins.

these
with weep

CHAP. VI. VERSE 2.

If a soul sin (it means a believer), *and commit a trespass against the Lord, and lye unto his neighbour.*— This lye is unbelief, and the neighbour is our precious Redeemer, who has shewed us mercy. A neighbour (saith Solomon) that is near, is better than a brother afar off, in the day of our calamity; and we have often found it so. *If the soul persist in unbelief concerning that which the Lord delivered him to keep.*— This deposit (Paul tells us) are two testimonies; the one is the testimony of CHRIST confirmed in us, and the other is that of a good conscience; and David calls the man blessed who keeps them. In the keeping these testimonies many blessings are included:— First, the way of the LORD will be kept—the heart will be kept from wandering with all diligence, and JESUS will be uppermost both day and night. The lips will keep knowledge, and his conversation will be a good one, ministring grace to the hearers. The foot will be kept in the house of GOD; that is, his thoughts will be sequestered with GOD alone, and the end of his going to the sanctuary will be, to find him in spirit and in truth, to worship him; and to follow,

follow, as fast as possible, the faith of his teacher (a). Good judgment will be kept; that is, he will in a measure be a discerner of spirits, and place his affections accordingly; I hate them, says David, that hate thee. The whole self will be kept also in the love of God. And lastly the faith will be kept; David might well call the man blessed that keeps these testimonies; for if he is not I know not who is. But the Psalmist once lost them for a time, and in bitterness cried out, "Why castest thou off my soul?" this was to lye concerning it, for God had not cast off his soul, though his countenance was hid. Others have lied in this respect as well as he: one says, "My hope is perished from the LORD;" and another, "I shall not see the LORD, even the LORD in the land of the living; from day even to night will he make an end of me." This was Hezekiah; but he soon changed the chattering note of the swallow for the melody of the dove; and the next news we hear from his mouth is a noble song, inscribed to the love and faithfulness of God; "The living, the living (saith he), shall praise thee, as I do this day; the father to the children shall make known thy truth."

To *lye in fellowship* is to say as Job did in the depth of his distress, "Corruption, thou art my father, and the worm is my mother and my sister; as for my hope, who shall see it?" I believe his meaning

(a) Hebrews, xiii. 7.

was this: I once thought myself a child of God, and that I did enjoy fellowship with him; but now I am turned over into the hand of the wicked (that is, the Devil), and the ALMIGHTY himself runs upon me like a giant; what can I expect but everlasting destruction? Yes, the Devil (or corruption in the abstract) is my father, and the worm that never dies is my mother and my sister: These shall be my associates to all eternity; my fellowship with God is no more. If I wait for the LORD, the grave is my house; I know I must die, and then comes darkness; I have made my bed already there, and expect no other rest. Ah Job! we must say to thee, Let God be true, but every man a liar; for thou hast found it so. What didst thou think of him when thou said'st, "I know that my Redeemer liveth?" Alas, said he, I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.

Or in a thing taken away by violence. This thing is the kingdom of heaven, which consisteth in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; it suffereth violence, and the believer takes it by force; and to lye concerning it, is to be in the same distress, through unbelief and the temptations of the Devil, as I have already mentioned; for to enjoy the testimonies that God giveth fellowship with him, or the kingdom of heaven, is one and the same thing, though distinguished by different appellations.

Or hath deceived his neighbour. This neighbour is our Christian brother, for who can deceive CHRIST?

We

We often deceive our brethren in our fits of unbelief; often weaken his faith, and bring up an evil report of the good of the land, cause him to go doubting as well as ourselves; and Solomon calls us foolish for this, and says we pluck the building down, instead of building one another up in our most holy faith.

VERSE 3.

Or have found that which was lost. David tells us what he found when unbelief prevailed, and the LORD's face was hid from him—even trouble and sorrow; then cried he unto the LORD, "O LORD, I beseech thee deliver my soul!" But Jonah lost his grief when GOD was near, and grace reigned. *To lye concerning it*, is to say as Job did, "GOD (said he) has taken away my judgment, and the ALMIGHTY has afflicted my soul; or, as another, "Why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our hearts from thy fear?" This is very impudent and hard-hearted language to the Most High, who declares that fury is not in him (towards the elect):—that we compass him about with lies, and then say, His ways are unequal; not considering that we procure these things to ourselves. But when the LORD is as the dew unto Israel, and the heart is melted with contrition, we shall use a language more becoming us. "Thou hast not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities," said the Psalmist in a similar situation.

VERSE 4.

Then it shall be because he hath sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, &c.

—The person that is to restore cannot mean the sinner, for 'tis impossible for any to quicken his own soul; when I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart is faint. No, 'tis the dear Redeemer must restore that which he took not away (a); and if ever his love appears wonderful, it is at such a time as this, when the backslider in heart is filled with his own ways. The LORD will also restore that which the sinner *had deceitfully gotten*, that is, his neighbours credence to a lie. I will restore comforts, saith he, to him and to his mourners; thy unbelief shall no longer weaken the hands of thy poor brother, for thou hast grieved him whom I would not have grieved. CHRIST will also restore *the lost thing which he found*; not a sorrow that worketh death, but a godly sorrow that worketh repentance, which need not be repented of. And then, saith he, shall ye remember your own evil ways and your doings that were not good, and shall loath yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities.

VERSE 5.

CHRIST shall restore the poor sinner's lost happiness *in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto.*

—The principal is himself.—Wisdom is the principal

(a) Psalm lxi. 4.

thing, saith Solomon, therefore get wisdom; and JESUS is made unto us wisdom, as well as understanding. He shall bless the man with his soul-comforting and sin-subduing presence again; and after humbling his heart, he shall give him more grace: for he resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. And when such an one has reaped again the peaceable fruit of CHRIST's everlasting righteousness, he rejoices with trembling, and finds that in the end it is by these trials he lives, and that in all these things is the life of his spirit. He'll be sick enough of his sin, and often remember the wormwood and the gall. He will not presume that grace may abound, but stand in awe and fear, after feeling how dreadful a thing it is to depart from the living God.

VERSE 6.

The trespass-offering is a ram (a) without blemish; and I believe it means the sinner himself—offer yourselves to God. Your bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost—and God requires both the body and the soul. My son, saith he, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways. I have no delight in the blood of bullocks, nor of goats; the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; and a broken and contrite heart I will not despise. A ram, I believe, is of all beasts one of the most vicious, and will resist in fighting as long as any, and is an exact resemblance of a sinner as can be; and yet such an one can be tamed by

(a) Isaiah lx. 7.

sovereign grace, and be presented to God, through CHRIST, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, and be found without fault before the throne, but no where else.

Before the ram was offered up, it was to have *Moses's estimation*; and how Moses esteems a sinner is known very well. He accuses us all the day long, and allows us neither merit nor hope from his law; tells us plainly we cannot serve God, and points to a Prophet whom God should raise up, and that we should do well to hear him. David tells us how he *esteemed himself* before God, when he beheld the rays of his Holiness.—So foolish was I and ignorant, I was as a beast before thee. But though Moses in the law, conscience, and the Devil condemn, CHRIST is the atonement, applied by faith, and his sin shall be forgiven.

CHAP. VII. VERSE 12.

The peace-offerings are of all the most delightful offerings to us, for pleasure and spiritual prosperity reigns within when these are presented to God; for praise is comely for the upright. *If it be a thanksgiving*, he must offer with it *unleavened cakes mingled with oil*:—that is, his praises will be free from the leaven of malice and wickedness; the heart must be sweetly tuned before the fruit of the lips can be pleasing to the LORD; unfeigned joy will be the spring of such an offering as this; it is the voice that God loves

loves to hear, and he will make your countenance comely while you are thus glorifying him, and the joy will be mutual. To offer him praise with a heart as dead as a stone, is very cold incense to love, and is little better than strange fire. At such times as these we should rather pray than pretend to praise the LORD.

Unleavened wafers anointed with oil must go up with this sacrifice. By wafers I understand that we must offer reverend thoughts of the Trinity, and admire the glorious mystery we cannot fully comprehend; for who can find out the ALMIGHTY to perfection? Wafers are alike, and so is the Father, Word, and Spirit. Wafers are circular, and frequently of divers colours; God is from everlasting to everlasting—a perpetual round of being; and his attributes are set forth by twelve jewels of divers colours in the breast-plate of Aaron. Wafers are seldom used but to secrete the mind of a person written in a letter; and when God is pleased to honour any soul with the gift of the Holy Ghost, and makes him a partaker of that divine nature, he is said to be sealed, and the beauteous image of the meek and lowly Saviour is often seen upon him, and this is the impression of the seal of heaven.

The last ingredients in this oblation are, *Cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, and fried*. These cakes are believers; and they are called God's bread. We being many, says Paul, are one bread. David calls

them the excellent of the earth, and his soul delighted in them above all living. If the Prophets may be credited, such are almost as rare to be found as the phoenix, especially in times of trouble. Elijah once declared he could not find one with whom he could commune as with his own soul; and he enjoyed the company of Elisha but a very little while after he had found him. Job makes the same complaint, and says he could not find a wise man among all his acquaintance, till Elihu came. Isaiah is grieved on the same account; and so was Micah. Jeremiah also was so sick of his companions, that he wished to spend his days in solitude; for he could find but few, if any, that did not either flatter or wound the upright spirit that God had given him. When we are so highly favoured as to meet with a Christian friend who is as our own soul, we shall often bless God for it, and take such an one in our thanksgiving-offering: we shall pray for them with unfeigned love—believe for them—hope for them—grieve for them—or rejoice with them. And our dear Redeemer meant nothing less when he said, *This is my commandment, that ye love one another, AS I have loved you.* By these cakes being mingled with oil, I understand they know in reality the true joy of the LORD: and Isaiah calls them the merry-hearted. By their being fried, understand, that they have been proved in the furnace of affliction; but through the tender mercy of the Most High, are come out without being burned (a). Such souls as these

(a) Isa. xliii. 2.

are of infinite worth to the church, and should be highly esteemed : they sing of mercy, judgment, and faithfulness : they are the only living witnesses for God upon earth ; and himself disdains not to call them blessings (a).

VERSE 13.

Besides the cakes he shall offer leavened bread. I believe the leavened bread doth signify many poor souls in their natural state, such as our children, for whom we may pray (except they grow incorrigible and reprobate), and also for others over whom our bowels often yearn. But wanton professors of religion, who live in carnal ease, and peaceful sloth, and who grow worse instead of better under the sound of mercy, and for such as have blasphemed the HOLY GHOST, we are forbid to pray : for God has declared by Jeremiah, that he will never hear us in their behalf. *There is a sin unto death*, says John, *I do not say you shall pray for it.* We may bring to God in prayer poor backsliding sinners likewise, such as Ephraim, who are called *cakes not turned*. All those who feel the burden of sin, and long for redemption by CHRIST alone, we are authorised to bring before God in prayer : but there are congregations that God will not be entreated for, though Noah, Daniel, and Job were to be the intercessors (b). But how then shall Ezekiel and Paul agree in this matter ; for the will of the latter is, *that prayers be made for all*

(a) Gen. xii. 2.

(b) Ezek. xiv. 14.

men? The Apostle answers for himself; and his reason is, that we may live a peaceable life under the government of our kings, magistrates, &c. and not that all men should be saved (a). He did not believe that all would be saved, because he had no warrant for such a faith. No, saith he, *What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.* So then, if there be vessels of wrath, and vessels of mercy, we have reason to believe that Paul agreed in spirit with our dear Redeemer, and prayed not for the salvation of the world, but for those whom God had chosen out of it, whether called or as yet uncalled by grace. It was to this remnant that he wished good luck in the name of the LORD, and to no other; *for if any man love not our LORD JESUS (saith he), let him be accursed.*

VERSE 14.

There is one thing more that GOD requires to be offered with this pleasing sacrifice; and he here calls it by Moses *an heave-offering*. It is to be offered to the LORD; but in particular it is *for the use of the Priest*, our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST; and I believe it means no more than a sigh, the fruit of a broken heart, and the result of a thankful spirit. David calls these oblations *sacrifices of righteousness*; and with such the LORD is well pleased. He often arises (to help)

(a) 1 Tim. ii. 12.

for the deep sighing of the poor in spirit, and sets a peculiar mark upon the men that sigh and cry. The holy men of old that saw by faith the day of the LORD JESUS (as did Abraham) sent him many a sigh, and were crucified with him long before he suffered in the flesh. They saw, by the blood of every beast which was slain, the spilling of his more precious blood: and by burning of them upon the altar, how his innocent soul was made an offering for sin, and consumed as it were in the burning wrath of GOD. I can never believe that they always viewed these bloody ceremonies with dry eyes, but often wept and groaned for him to whom they looked by faith, and mourned as for an only son. This kind of grief doth well comport with gratitude and thanksgiving, and is frequently mingled with a believer's best happiness; for while the soul is melting in sorrow over the sufferings of the Lamb of God, he loaths himself for the iniquity that caused it, and glorifies God for the unspeakable gift of his dearly beloved Son.

VERSE 15.

The flesh of the sacrifice of his peace-offerings shall be eaten the same day that it is offered; it shall not be left until the morning.—By the flesh, I believe, is meant our Redeemer; for his assuming our nature, and dying in it, is the cause of every peaceful moment we have enjoyed since we found him, and the only mean of peace between GOD and man. GOD was in CHRIST reconciling the world unto himself. He is to be eaten (or

received) in the day he is offered to us. That day is the whole space of time which God has set apart for the gathering in of his elect; and when that number is completely made up, time shall be no longer. To defer the receiving of him until the morning, doth signify, that many die in their sin, and yet expect to find mercy at the general doom; not considering, that as the tree falls so it lies, and that there is no repentance in the grave. We must know for ourselves that CHRIST hath power on earth to forgive sins; and that his precious salvation is to be known and enjoyed before night cometh, in which no man can work. The LORD offered himself to the free-will of thousands in the days of his flesh, and was heartily rejected by them; and such he declared should die in their sins; for where he was they should never come. But when he offered himself to poor Mary Magdalene and others, he found a cordial reception, and was entertained from that hour with a hearty welcome; and she loved much. I will be bound for them they left none of him until the resurrection morning, but ardently imbibed every word that dropped from his precious lips, and watched every look that beamed from his glorious eye; for they lived in his smiles, but were inconsolable in his absence. They rejected not his Godhead, but worshipped from the heart every perfection therein, by calling him LORD; *for no man can call JESUS LORD (that is, receive him as such), but by the Holy Ghost.* CHRIST is still offered in the Bible, and in many pulpits also; but as our days are like the former ones, the
souls

souls of multitudes loath this light bread ; and as the Israelites said, so say thousands now, Our souls are dried away ; for we have nothing before our eyes but this manna. So their hearts turn back to Egypt ; and their vain lives proclaim it as loud as their tongues. But God knows whom he has chosen ; and he will never go a begging with his dear Son (a). No ; it is the sinner that must be humbled, if ever he is exalted to this honour. God often makes the elect cry long, and cry bitterly ere they find mercy ; and 'tis fit he should, that they may know how to prize it when it comes.

VERSE 16.

But if the sacrifice he offers be a vow, or a voluntary offering, it may be eaten on the morrow, as well as on the same day he offers it.—There seems to be no command from the LORD for these vows (b) or voluntary offerings ; but I believe there are few believers but what offer them to the LORD in the days of their first love. They are the effusions of an heart overflowing with his love, but are too often tinged with a little self-confidence. After Jacob was turned out of his father's house, through the barbarity of his brother Esau, the LORD meets him by the way, and gives him so glorious a vision of his majesty, that he calls the ground whereon he lay the house of God, and the very gate of heaven ; sets up a pillar for a memorial on the holy

(a) Exod. xxiii. 21.

(b) Deut. xxiii. 22.

spot, and anoints it with unfeigned joy. And though at this time he is so poor, that perhaps a staff and one suit of cloaths are all his riches, yet his faith lays in a large stock of temporal goods for futurity (under the blessing of God); and so expanded is the heart of this poor soul, that nothing will serve his generosity but a vow, and he performs it in these words:—If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, &c. of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth *to thee*. This was well said, and well meant; and I dare say Jacob was no niggard to the poor, but shewed his faith by his works (for God wanted nothing at his hand). But if covetousness ever prevailed for a time (as perhaps it might in Jacob as well as others, seeing our hearts are fashioned alike), did he not reflect with shame on his vow, think you? David, also; he must make a vow too; but it was after another manner:—LORD, remember David (said he), and all his afflictions, how he swore unto the LORD, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob; surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, nor slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the LORD, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob. Lo we heard of it at Ephratah, we found it in the fields of the wood.—This was the ark of God that was found in the field of Joshua the Bethshemite, and of which David vowed to take so much care: But God permitted the
ark,

ark, contrary to his wish, to remain at Kirjath-Jearin twenty years; and when David was made King, he proposed to his nobles to bring it home; but by the way God smote Uzza for his presumption in touching it, and poor David was afraid of God that day, saying, How shall I bring the ark of God home to me? So it remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months. David made this vow in the excess of his love for the divine presence; but I think a little self-confidence was mingled with it.— And now, when he had an opportunity of possessing that which his soul longed for, the death of Uzza scares him almost out of his wits; fear trips up his heels, and he defers to pay that which he vowed; and I question but he thought of this affair, when he said, LORD, what is man, that thou art mindful of him!

Before the ALMIGHTY had brought up Jonah from the belly of the fish, he makes a vow; and he not only makes it, but says, I will pay that which I have vowed; salvation is of the LORD. As rebellion was his principal crime, I suppose he vowed to rebel no more; and told the LORD, in the simplicity of his heart, how tractable he would be in future. But, alas! when God deferred his judgments on Nineveh, it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. He was taken here with the words of his own mouth; and the LORD, willing to try him a second time, says, Dost thou well to be angry? and he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death.—
I believe

I believe Solomon was taken in this snare, for he has left us many cautions concerning vows:—Be more ready to hear (what God has to say) than to give him the sacrifice of a fool. Thou had'st better not vow, continues he, than vow and not pay, for God has no pleasure in fools. Peter the Apostle dearly loved the LORD; and in order to shew it (as he thought) he vowed that if all forsook Jesus yet would not *be*: but the sorrowful event of his self-confidence is well known; and I believe he thought afterward it was better not to vow at all, but rest contented with the vows of God in our behalf, which can never be broken. There is a sacrifice of this kind that is very pleasing to God and profitable to us; but faith must be very strong before ever we can offer it up. We may safely swear or vow that the LORD liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness (*a*), and we may feed on this many days.

VERSE 17.

The remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day shall be burnt with fire. I have already said, that this flesh signifies the human nature of the LORD JESUS; and as he rose from the dead on the third day, and left mortality for ever, with all its weaknesses, such as hunger, thirst, and weariness, we are prohibited from entertaining notions so gross concerning our LORD after he rose from the dead; and the man that imbibes them, does it at the peril of his soul.—

(*a*) Jeremiah iv. 2.

By the flesh being burnt with fire, I understand, that the same body in which he suffered and died was filled on the day of his resurrection with all the fulness of God, who is called a consuming fire. I believe that the Godhead, which dwelt therein before it was laid in the grave, so sanctified it, that corruption never touched this Holy One, and that he ascended in immortality. It is witnessed by all the Apostles, that a cloud received him out of their sight.

VERSE 21.

Moreover, the soul that shall TOUCH any unclean thing, as the uncleanness (or sin) of any man, or any unclean beast, or any abominable unclean thing, and eat the flesh of the sacrifice of peace-offerings, even that soul shall be cut off from his people. I believe this unclean thing is error; such as Arminianism, Arianism, Antinomianism, and every other lying doctrine. Paul advises the Colossians, when he is warning them against false worship (*a*), neither to touch, taste, or handle any thing that pertains to the rudiments of men. Touching is an act of the will; for no man can make ye touch except ye like it, and it is a voluntary act of the soul that is here meant. The souls of many believers have been beguiled, through flattery or weakness, to imbibe these accursed tenets, to their sorrow; but having an Advocate with the Father, who is JESUS CHRIST the righteous, they have been happily delivered from them, and have taken up arms against

(*a*) Coloss. ii. 18.

those that hatched these cockatrice eggs, and have often marred their spiders webs, so that many poor souls have been disentangled, and have enjoyed sweet liberty again. But some will say, we never heard of such errors in the Old Testament as Arminianism, &c. If self-will makes an Arminian, what else was Simeon, who digged down the wall of salvation? What but Arminians were the Princes of Israel, when they said to Moses, You take too much upon you, for *all* the people are holy? This trial so stirred the spirit of the meekest of men, that he preached the election of God to them (*a*), and God soon convinced the rebels that they were not holy; but caused the earth to open and swallow them up, and they went down alive into the pit, with all that pertained unto them. What but Antinomians were the Israelites, who turned the grace of God into wantonness, by worshipping the image of a beast, eating and drinking in honour to it, and then rising up to play?—What but an Arian was king Saul, when he said to Samuel, I have not made supplication unto the LORD, I forced myself therefore and offered up a burnt-offering? If he made no supplication to the LORD (that is, the LORD JESUS, for there is but one LORD and one faith), his proud heart rejected him. Samuel immediately calls him a fool for his pains, and declares that the kingdom shall not continue with him, but that it is given to his neighbour, who was better than he; and he visited his deposed Majesty but once more unto the day of his death (*b*).

(*a*) Numb. xvi. 5.

(*b*) 1 Sam. xiii. 12:

Or any unclean beast. It is generally believed that the beast, upon which the Whore sitteth (as mentioned in the Revelations), means no other than the Pope (blasphemously called his Holiness); that the Whore signifies the whole Catholic body of this infernal head. I am inclined to believe it too; for no people seem so fond of shedding blood as the present race of Babylonians (commonly termed Papists); witness the cruel Inquisition in Spain and Portugal, and the ancient martyrdoms in Smithfield! This also is no new doctrine, for the Canaanites were Papists, I firmly believe; they were worshippers of images and pictures, as the modern Romans are; and God commanded the Israelites at their peril to save any of their baubles while they lived among them (*a*). When the church of God were captives in Babylon, they felt their yoke heavy enough; but the worst of all their trials were the cruel mockings and hellish mirth of their tyrannical victors; and the Israelites were so worn out with hard usage, that some of the most pious among them composed an elegy, in which is contained a prophecy concerning the destruction of that accursed people: and no doubt this sorrowful song was dictated by the spirit of God (*b*).

To *touch the unclean beast* is to cleave to his errors, and be of one spirit with him; but God has prohibited any such familiarity; we are to have no veneration at all for those *good sort of people* called Roman

(*a*) Numb. xxxiii. 52.

(*b*) Psalm cxxxvii. 8, 9.

Catholics; it will be dangerous in the latter days even to live among them (a). *If a person cleave to any of the errors here mentioned, and eat of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace-offerings, his soul shall be cut off from his people.* He is not to imagine that the Lamb of God was sacrificed to save him in these abominations; No, in this state he has no business with CHRIST at all, not even to take that holy name upon his tongue. And yet, as Milton says, "many will presume."

VERSE 23.

Ye shall eat no manner of fat of ox, or of sheep, or of goats. GOD has given to believers a promise that they shall be fat and flourishing, by which he means their spiritual prosperity: but leanness of soul is no blessing, for Jeremiah cries out bitterly against it. We are not to imagine that God prohibited the Israelites from eating the fat of sheep, ox, or goats, literally—No, his word is spiritual, and it is given to none but the elect (b); the reprobate has no business with it (c). I believe the ox signifies a minister of CHRIST;—thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn (or one that unfolds the scriptures). Doth GOD take care for oxen? says Paul; nay, but this is spoken for our sakes. The fat then of a minister of CHRIST is the most comely part of his soul, which is no other than faith and love; for in these two fruits of the Spirit are included every

(a) Rev. xviii. 4.

(b) John xvii. 14.

(c) Isa. viii. 16.

other.

other. But it must be remembered that they are blind in part; for no man knoweth the heart of another, but God alone. Ministers are often deceived in their hearers; and it is very common in these days, as well as in ancient times, for people to be peculiarly fond of their approbation (*a*), especially if he be a godly one (for the arrantest hypocrite can tell the difference): with his kind word, or kind look, they will often set themselves down for saved. This is living upon the fat of the ox; but it is not subsisting upon your own fat. Paul chided them sharply for it; *Was I crucified for you? or was you baptized in my name?* said he: No; some of you would have plucked out your eyes for me; but when I came to discern you, then you became my enemies for telling the truth. The Prophet Ezekiel was pestered with a number of these gospel leeches (*b*), that cry, Give, give: and God compares them to four insatiable things; namely, the grave, the barren womb, the thirsty earth, and the fire.—Solomon declares a good man (that is, a man possessed of God's good Spirit) shall be satisfied from himself, and not from another (*c*).

Ye shall eat no manner of fat of ox.—A Christian often partakes of their grace; but if he had neither faith of his own to receive, nor love to digest it, how could

(*a*) Prov. xxix. 26.

(*b*) Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32.

(*c*) Prov. xiv. 14. and Gal. vi. 4.

he be the better for the grace of another? The sheep that is mentioned here is a Christian likewise, and one of those that are to be set on the right hand of CHRIST. Paul calls them *helps* to the church; but we are not to live upon their fat. We are also forbid to eat the fat of a goat. The goats are no favourites with God; they are to be set on his left hand, and are to depart into everlasting fire: and even some of these have a comely part. King Saul was admired for the goodliness of his *person*; he was a tall and well-proportioned man: but his goodly carcase was once (through fear) obliged to prostrate itself at the feet of the witch of Endor. Oh! what indignity was this to the king of Israel! Absalom was almost deified by the vulgar for the sweetness of his *speech*; so that the poor old king his father had well nigh lost both his crown and his life (a). The beauty of Absalom's face was uncommon, and the fineness of his locks peculiar to himself; but he died in youth, and his life was among the unclean: his dying bed was not a regal one; for he expired in a solitary wood, and his fine hair was his own executioner. The bloody king Agag was exceedingly beloved by king Saul (and no wonder; for birds of a feather will flock together); for he would spare his life, though God commanded him to be slain. But Samuel ordered him to be brought forth; and Agag had taken a deal of pains that

(a) 2 Sam. xv. 4. 6.

day to dress himself; and he came unto Samuel *delicately*; thinking, no doubt, that the poor unpolished Prophet would either be startled at his glittering ornaments and purple robes, or moved to compassion with so elegant a figure: for he said to himself, *Surely the bitterness of death is past!* but he was mistaken; for Samuel was as delicate as himself, and could not make a meal upon a fine coat; he hewed him in pieces before the LORD (a). Jezebel had her fleshly excellence also; and it lay in the attire of her head, and in a fair complexion; for as her husband was dead, and Jehu was soon to be king, I suppose she wanted to captivate him with the elegance of her dress, and by that means get both a husband and a crown again. Therefore as soon as she heard that this military gentleman was come to Jezreel, she painted her face, and tired her head, and saluted him out at a window: but Jehu was a minister of justice, to put an end to her wretched life; and he regarded neither cap nor face, but ordered the eunuchs of the seraglio to throw her down; they did so; and the house dogs made a meal upon their mistress (b). The unbelieving lord had something pertaining to him which was very pleasing to the ambitious, and that was a title. By the king's leaning upon his arm (which is esteemed a great honour), I suppose he was principal confidant, and prime minister. But

(a) 1 Sam. xv. 32, 33.

(b) 2 Kings ix. 30, 36.

alas ! when the sound of plenty rung through the city (for there had been a grievous famine), the rude populace regarded not his lordship, but trode him to death in the city gate ; that the word of God might be fulfilled which he spake by the Prophet Elisha (a).

It may possibly seem strange, but the devil himself is said to have a comely proportion ; which God in his infinite mercy has promised not to conceal, but to make it known to his elect (b). *And we, says Paul, are not ignorant of Satan's devices.* But the world cannot say so ; for he has blinded their eyes. His comely proportion is to personate an angel of light ; this snare is to entrap religious hypocrites : they drink deep of the delusion, and bear his image, and really appear what they are not. The ambitious prefer his pride, and esteem that more lovely than any thing else : the blood-thirsty cleave close to his insensibility, and the learned to the wisdom of the serpent : the covetous prefer his self-love ; and the enterprising thief his subtilty. These are some of the parts, powers, and comely proportions of the god of this world.

(a) 2 Kings vii. 19, 20.

(b) Job xli. 12.

VERSE 24.

The fat of the beast that dieth of itself, and the fat of that which is torn with beasts, may be used in any other USE; but ye shall in no wise eat of it.—These beasts are sinners (a) that die under the curse of God, and the weight of their own guilt; and though God has declared that we have all destroyed ourselves, yet it is his will that a few shall find grace, through the redemption that is in CHRIST. I have said, That the fat doth signify the spirit of a Christian, which is called the *candle* of the LORD: and David says, *The LORD will light my candle; the LORD my GOD will enlighten my darkness.* The spirit of a sinner is also called a *candle*: and Job says, *How oft is the candle of the wicked put out!* God himself is the light of a Christian: he is *the light that lightens the Gentiles, as well as the glory of his people Israel.* When God has thus enlightened them, they are not put under a bushel. No, says Paul, *Your faith is spoken of throughout the world;* the amazing change is blazed abroad. The spirit of a sinner is set on fire also, but it is from hell (b); and the flame that issues from the mouth of Satan lights it (c). But CHRIST calleth this light darkness. We should never know what spirit they were of, if they did

(a) Eccles. iii. 21.

(b) James iii. 6.

(c) Job xli. 21.

not hang out their signs; and it is by their fruits that we know them. We must have no fellowship with them: if they die in their sins we are neither to pity nor mourn for them, how bright soever their accomplishments might have been.

Them that are torn with beasts, I believe, are those who die mad; and they are torn in various manners now, as in the days of CHRIST; some rage vehemently, while others droop with melancholy: but the devils are the beasts who possess and tear them. GOD has forbid any sorrow for these; and all the use we may make of their spirits is, to take warning by their fall—be more thankful for our escape—and acquiesce with GOD in his judgments (a).

VERSE 26.

Moreover, ye shall eat no manner of BLOOD of fowl, or of beast.—Christians are called fowls of heaven; as eagles, doves, &c. eagles, because they are swift to hear the word of GOD: they dwell on high; and their spiritual youth is renewed like the eagle: they suck up blood; that is, if they eat not the flesh and drink not the blood of the Son of GOD by faith, they have no life in them (b). They also are ravenous for the supper which GOD has promised to make of his and their enemies (c). They are called doves, because

(a) Rev. xvi. 5.

(b) John vi. 53.

(c) Rev. vi. 10. and Rev. xix. 17, 18.

of their timidity: they work out their own salvation with fear and trembling: they mourn under the absence of their LORD, as the dove for the loss of its mate; but are oftentimes as silly (a).

The blood is the life (b); and to attempt to crush or devour the divine life that is seen on a Christian, is abominable in the sight of God. In this case, he will have eye for eye, tooth for tooth, blood for blood, and burning for burning. The Apostle Paul knew much of his terrors for so doing. The persecutor says, Let us swallow them up alive as the grave. The oppressor beats them to pieces; and he is called a churner (c); not knowing that he is making butter for the LORD to eat (d); therefore no thanks to him. The white washed Pharisees are called a nose; they snuff at the Branch—at the offerings of God—and puff at the poor Christian;—thinking to blow his candle out, because they hate the light. But the nose of Jesus pierceth through snares; for who can deceive him? and he vows he'll never smell in their solemn assemblies (e). The erroneous monster (f) is called a fowler; and busy enough he is with his nets and traps to entangle the fowls of heaven; not considering that no hurt can befall the man on whom is God's mark (g): so he

(a) Hof. vii. 11.

(c) Prov. xxx. 33.

(e) Amos v. 21.

(g) Rev. vii. 3.

(b) Levit. xvii. 11.

(d) Isa. vii. 14, 15.

(f) Rev. ix. 7, 10.

labours in the fire, and wearies himself for very vanity. But the adamantine hypocrite is indefatigable (a), and will pursue them through all the thousands of Judah (b); and this is to fulfil the word of the LORD: *Let both grow together (saith he) until the harvest; and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.—Here is the patience and the faith of the saints (c).* But he that leads a Christian into captivity (or spiritual bondage) must go into captivity himself; and if he will kill their comforts with the sword (d), he must also be killed with the sword.

VERSE 30.

The breast may be waved for a wave-offering before the LORD.—I take this to be a sorrowful oblation; and the ALMIGHTY often accepts of them instead of peace and praise. Our dear Redeemer once said to his disciples, *Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.* And again, *Be ye not of a sorrowful countenance:* sweetly intimating, that we have no cause, except his blessed face be hid; and then, saith he, *ye shall have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice.* He well knows that the light of his countenance will eclipse all sadness, and that

(a) Ezek. iii. 7, 8, 9.

(c) Rev. xiii. 10.

(b) 1 Sam. xxiii. 23.

(d) Psal. xxxvii. 14, 15.

his absence is worse than temporal death to the soul he hath ever shined upon.

The *wave-breast* seems to be a soul reeling to and fro in a time of trouble, *and is*, as David says, *at its wits end*. But whether it be through spiritual or temporal perplexities, it may be brought before the LORD; and this infinite privilege is peculiar to believers. A man in whom is no faith will run to a friend, to a minister, to a fortune-teller, or any one but to God. But this is not the case with a Christian; he will go to God first; and by honouring the LORD with his confidence, it often happens that a friend and comforter is sent to him. O! could we but give the ALMIGHTY more faith, how easy would our outward afflictions appear! But alas! it seems the most difficult thing in life to do as Moses commanded the Israelites, that is, *Stand still and see the salvation of God*. The scriptures often compare believers to children, for various reasons; and very like the type they are; for let God speak the same thing to them a thousand times, and a thousand times they will be sure to forget it. Tell a lively boy to stand still, and he may obey for a minute or two; but keep his hands and feet out of action if you can. They will be meddling, as Solomon says: but fretting and contriving will never add a cubit to our stature. Happy is the soul whose chief employment in these times is to look, pray, wait, and expect deliverance from him who cannot lie; for he hath said, *Call upon me in*

the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. This is to bear the cross like a valiant man indeed: this is to glorify God in the fires.

When we are thus compassed about with distresses, the LORD has commanded us to bring the offering *with our own hands*.—It is to teach us, that trusting to the prayers of ministers or Christians, except we also persevere in prayer ourselves, is not the way to be patient under it, or delivered from it. Our most merciful and compassionate High-priest has condescended to accept of this *for himself*, who was a *man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*; and for our unspeakable comfort, we still feel the sounding of his bowels towards us. Moses might well exclaim and say, *What nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for.*

The sons of the priest were to partake of the *wave-breast*;—and this may teach us, that the sons of God, those who are Christians indeed, will sympathize with and comfort their distressed brethren (a). They, and only they, can bear their burdens, and so fulfil the law of CHRIST.

(a) Lev. vii. 31.

VERSE 32.

And the right shoulder shall ye give unto the priest for an heave-offering.—This is another privilege peculiar to believers, and is almost similar to the last I have mentioned. I believe it means no more than a soul weary and heavy laden with divers afflictions; and the blessing enjoined by God is, that we heave or cast our burdens upon him: he has promised to sustain both the burden and the burden-bearer; and this is to shew us our own weakness—where our great strength lieth—and the infinite worth of Almighty power. David and others have often complained of being bowed down; some through the oppression of the wicked; some with divers temptations; some with daily infirmities; and others with the wrath of God and a guilty conscience; and this is the heaviest of them all. *Thy wrath lieth hard upon me*, saith the Psalmist, *and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves.* But in this respect we have no right to murmur; for as the guiltless Saviour drank it to excess for our sins, so believers must taste of the same cup; and he declares they shall, sooner or later. There is a comfort even here, which is, that having once tasted it, we may bid adieu to a second draught. Therefore hear now this, *thou afflicted and drunken, but not with wine; thus saith the LORD, the LORD and thy GOD, that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold! I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury: thou shalt no more drink it*

it again (a). If we go mourning and fretting under our burdens, we make no use of the shoulder of our dear Redeemer, upon which is the government of all things in heaven and in earth; and this is to live more like the world, who have no God to go to, than like sons and daughters of the LORD GOD ALMIGHTY.

N U M B E R S.

CHAP. xviii. VERSE 32.

And ye shall bear no sin by reason of it, when ye have heaved from it the best of it.—It is no sin to be afflicted; nor was Job chastened because he was wickeder than his three friends, but better approved of than either of them. God corrected him that his grace might shine the brighter, and he be a happy partaker of his holiness: for if the rod is spared the son is hated; and this we may depend upon. I think of all the friends that ever pretended to comfort, poor Job's were the most hard-hearted, and the most insensible. What words were those to soothe a troubled soul that dropped from the mouth

(a) Isaiah li. 17. 21, 22.

of Bildad in the eighteenth chapter! Job calls it breaking him in pieces: and, O! said he, *I also could speak as you do, if your soul were in my soul's stead: but be ye afraid of the sword* (for ye have never felt it yet). Another throws this taunt in his face, *Our substance is not cut down*. No; I suppose you took care of self, Eliphaz. David was not hunted up and down like a partridge upon the mountains because Saul was better beloved than he: Oh no! but that Saul might fill up the measure of his iniquity, and David be polished after the similitude of a palace.

The best of these sorrowful offerings is to be heaved to the LORD.—I take the best of it to be the faith and patience we exercise under them. When the LORD has received these, we may be sure of a glorious issue; for patience must have her perfect work. Thus God is exalted before he has mercy upon us; and we reap the peaceable fruit of righteousness, says Paul. Moses declares that this effort of faith and patience shall be reckoned unto us as though it were the corn of the threshing floor, and as the fulness of the wine press (a). It is possible to rejoice in God when all earthly resources are cut off; for, says Habbakuk, *Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines;*

(a) Numb. xviii. 27.

the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will joy in the GOD of my salvation.

F I N I S.

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